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REGIONAL APPROACH TO DISARMAMENT WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL SECURITY

Working paper submitted by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

1. Regional disarmament measures can effectively help reduce the risk of local conflicts and strengthen the process of confidence-building and gradual removal of the causes of instability in individual regions. Such measures form a component of the general process of disarmament, and must be viewed in the context of global security. The relationship between regional and global security is determined inter alia by the fact that the strengthening of stability and the disarmament process in one region must not lead to disruption of the balance of forces in other regions, particularly as a result of export of arms from the region where the reduction takes place.

2. Regional measures must cover all forms of arms limitation and disarmament. They could include issues of nuclear and conventional weapons, naval forces, the international arms trade, the non-proliferation of nuclear and chemical weapons, military missiles and missile technology, defence doctrines and the reduction of military presence abroad. The priority of any given regional measures is determined by the actual conditions in each of the regions.

3. The regional approach to disarmament must be implemented in the light of the specifics of each region and with the participation of all parties concerned. Its objective is the attainment of the lowest possible level of armaments while respecting the principle of non-impairment of anybody's security and the assumption by the parties in this process of multilateral political, military, economic and other obligations.

4. Confidence-building measures in the political, military and other spheres could be a prerequisite for the activation of regional disarmament. Depending on local conditions, the confidence-building process may initially be developed on a bilateral basis, the non-military sphere as well, gradually evolving into security measures covering broader and broader areas, and at certain stages, by agreement between the regional States concerned, would take the form of appropriate disarmament agreements.

In this context, great importance attaches to utilization of the experience of individual regions, particularly Europe, where great progress has been achieved in the implementation of such measures.

5. The United Nations can stimulate the disarmament process at the regional level, serve as a centre for compilation of the necessary information and its submission to interested parties, and also render them consultative services and discharge other intermediary functions.

At this stage, the Disarmament Commission should define the interrelationship between regional and global security, draw up general recommendations regarding regional disarmament measures applicable to individual regions, in the first place for regions of heightened tension, and, in concrete terms, discuss a model set of elements of a regional security structure which would include, in particular: limitation of military potentials to levels agreed upon between the participants in the structure; abstention from the development, production, acquisition and deployment of all forms of mass destruction and modern means of delivering them; limitation of the supply to other regions and acquisition of conventional weapons, particularly the most destabilizing forms of offensive weapons; development of systems of measures for increasing trust, openness and predictability in the military sphere; and establishment of regional centres for reducing the threat of war and preventing conflicts. Such measures must of course be implemented on the initiative and with the consent of all States of the region concerned, taking into account the specific security requirements of that region. Of particular current interest is the search for lines of a system of agreements on the limitation of trade in weapons in individual regions and on the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear and chemical weapons and certain forms of military missiles and missile technology. The Commission could indicate possible directions for United Nations participation in regional disarmament in association with United Nations peace-keeping operations in individual regions.

The process of arms limitation and disarmament at the regional level must be accompanied by verification measures. The United Nations could assume responsibility for implementing verification functions.

The permanent members of the Security Council could act as guarantors of regional agreements.